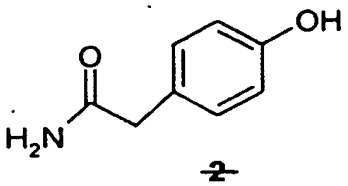
Listing of claims:

1. (Currently Amended) An improved process for the preparation of (S)-atenolol (1), comprising the steps of:

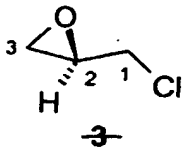
a) reacting a phenol of formula:



(2)

~~2~~

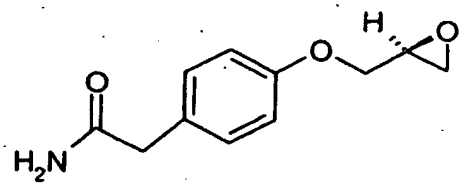
with an (R)-epichlorohydrin of formula:



(3)

~~3~~

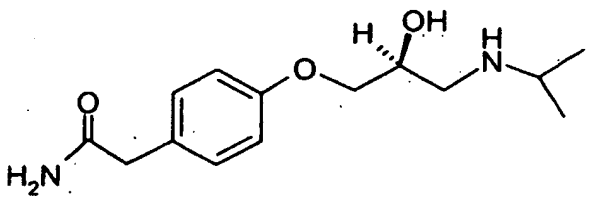
in the presence of an alkali metal hydroxide and a quaternary ammonium salt as a phase transfer catalyst in ~~an~~ a solely aqueous solution at a temperature of -10°C to 0°C to obtain optically active intermediate glycidyl ether of formula:



(4)

~~4~~

b) reacting the optically active intermediate glycidil ether (4) with isopropylamine at 10° to 40° C to obtain (S)-atenolol of formula



(1)

~~4~~

in high optical purity of >99% ee.

2. (Currently Amended) ~~A~~ The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the alkali metal hydroxide is selected from sodium hydroxide or potassium hydroxide.

3. (Currently Amended) ~~A~~ The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the amount of alkali metal hydroxide is 1 to 1.5 moles to 1 mole of the phenol **(2)**.

4. (Currently Amended) ~~A~~ The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the amount of (R)-epichlorohydrin is 1 to 3 moles to 1 mole of the phenol.

5. (Currently Amended) ~~A~~ The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the quaternary ammonium salt has the formula $R^1R^2R^3R^4N^+X^-$
wherein each of R^1, R^2, R^3 and R^4 ~~are~~ is the same or different and ~~are~~ is an alkyl group ~~groups~~ having 1 to

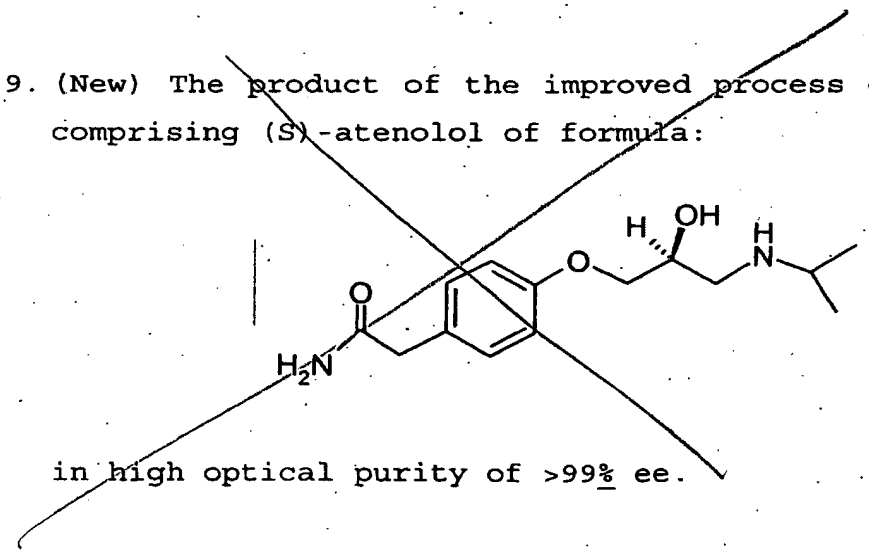
16 carbon atoms ~~selected from methyl, ethyl, propyl,~~ ~~butyl~~, phenyl or benzyl, X is a group selected from chlorine, bromine, iodine, hydrogen sulphate or hydroxyl.

6. (Currently Amended) ~~A~~ The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the amount of quaternary ammonium salt is 0.001 to 2% by weight of phenol **(2)**.

7. (Currently Amended) ~~A~~ The process as claimed in claim 1 further comprising formation of chlorohydrin ~~chlorohydrine (5)~~ as a side product.

8. (Currently Amended) ~~A~~ The process as claimed in claim 7 ~~1~~ further comprising reacting chlorohydrin ~~chlorohydrine (5)~~ with ~~isolpropylamine~~ isopropylamine at 10 to 40°C to obtain S-atenolol.

9. (New) The product of the improved process of claim 1, comprising (S)-atenolol of formula:



(1)

in high optical purity of >99% ee.